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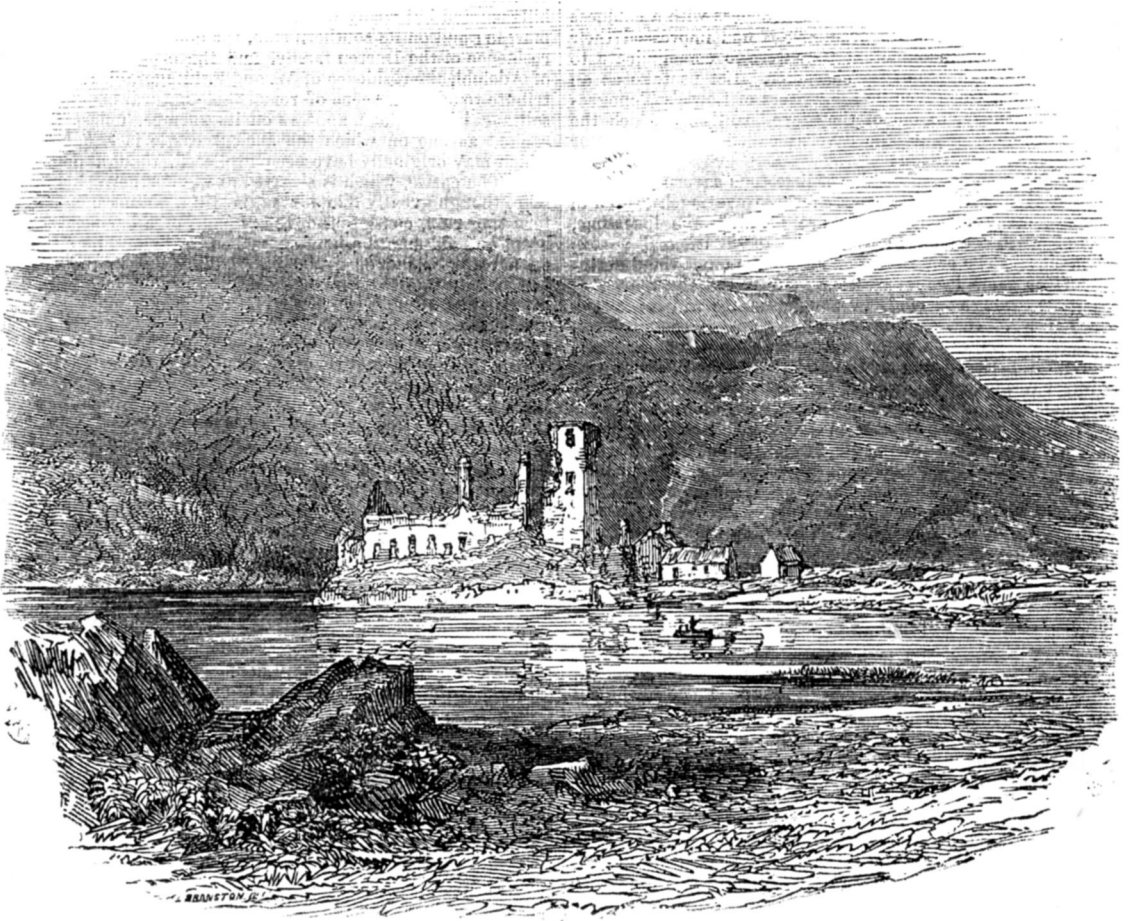
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VOLUME I.



THE CASTLE AND LAKE OF INCHQUIN, COUNTY OF CLARE.

CONNEMARA itself, now so celebrated for its lakes and mountains, was not less unknown a few years since than the greater portion of the county of Clare. Without roads, or houses of entertainment for travellers, its magnificent coast and other scenery were necessarily unvisited by the pleasure tourists, and but little appreciated even by their inhabitants themselves. But Clare can no longer be said to be an unvisited district: the recent formation of roads has opened to observation many features of interest previously inaccessible to the traveller, and its singular coast scenery—the most sublimely magnificent in the British islands, if not in Europe—has at least been made known to the public by topographical and scientific explorers—it has become an attractive locality to artists and pleasure tourists, and will doubtless be visited by increasing numbers of such persons in each successive year.

There is however as yet in this county too great a deficiency in the number of respectable houses of entertainment suited to the habits of pleasure tourists; for though the wealthier and more educated classes in the British empire are becoming daily a more travelling and picturesque-hunting genus, they

will not be content to live on fine scenery, but must have food for the body as well as for the mind; and truly they must be enthusiastic lovers of the picturesque, who, to gratify their taste, will subject themselves to the vicissitudes of such an uncertain climate as ours, without the certainty of such consoling comforts as are afforded in a clean and comfortable inn.

Yet we do not despair of seeing this want soon supplied. Wherever there is a demand for a commodity it will not be long wanting; and the people of Clare are too sagacious not to perceive, however slowly, the practical wisdom of holding out every inducement of this kind to those who might be disposed to visit them and spend their money among them. The first step necessary, however, to produce such results in any little frequented district, is to make its objects of interest known to the public by the pencil and the pen—the rest will follow in due course; and our best efforts, such as they are, shall not be unexerted towards effecting such an important good as well for Clare as for many other as yet little known localities of our country.

Clare is indeed on many accounts deserving of greater atten-

tion than it has hitherto received. It is a county rich in attractions for the geologist and naturalist, and interesting in the highest degree to the lovers of the picturesque. With a surface singularly broken and diversified, full of mountains, hills, lakes, and rivers, dotted all over with every class of ancient remains, its scenery is peculiarly Irish, and though of a somewhat melancholy aspect, it is never wanting in a poetic and historic interest. Such a district is not indeed exactly suited to the tastes of the common scenery-hunter, for it possesses but little of that woody and artificially adorned scenery which he requires, and can alone enjoy; and hence it has usually been described by tourists and topographers with a coldness which shows how little its peculiarities had impressed their feelings, and how incompetent they were to communicate to others a just estimate of its character. Let us take as an example the notice given by the writers of Lewis's Topographical Dictionary, of one of the Clare beauties of which the natives are most proud—the caverns called the To-meens or To-mines, near Kiltanan:—

“At Kiltanan is a succession of limestone caverns, through which a rivulet takes its course: these are much visited in summer; many petrified shells are found in the limestone, some of which are nearly perfect, and—*very curious!*”

This it must be confessed is cold enough; but the description of the same locality given by our friend the author of the Guide through Ireland, is, as our readers will see, not a whit warmer. It is as follows:—

“A mile from Tulla is Kiltanan, the handsome residence of James Moiney, Esq.; and in addition to the pleasure of a well-kept residence, in a naked and sadly neglected country, some interest is excited by the subterraneous course of the rivulet called the To-meens, which waters this demesne!”

Now, would any person be induced by such descriptions as these to visit the said To-meens? We suspect not. But hear with what delight a native writer of this county actually revels in a description of these remarkable caves:—

“About a mile N. W. of Tulla lies the river of Kiltanan, and Milltown, famous for its ever-amazing and elegant subterraneous curiosities, called the To-mines: they form a part of the river, midway between Kiltanan House and the Castle of Milltown, extending under ground for a space, which (from its invisible winding banks and crystal meanders) may reasonably be computed a quarter of an English mile: they are vaulted, and sheltered with a solid rock, transmitting a sufficiency of light and air by intermediate chinks and apertures gradually offering at certain intervals.

“At each side of this Elysian-like river are roomy passages or rather apartments, freely communicating one with the other, and scarcely obvious to any inclemency whatsoever: they are likewise decorated with a sandy beach level along to walk on, whilst the curious spectators are crowned with garlands of ivy, hanging in triplets from the impending rocky shades: numbers of the sporting game, the wily fox, the wary hare, and the multiplying rabbit, &c. merrily parading in view of their own singular and various absconding haunts and retreats. Ingenious nature thus entertains her welcome visitants from the entrance to the extremity of the To-mines. Lo! when parting liberally rewarded, and amply satisfied with such egregious and wonderful exhibitions, a bridge or arch over the same river, curiously composed of solid stone, appears to them as a lively representation of an artificial one.

What can the much boasted of Giants' Causeway, in the north of this kingdom, produce but scenes of horror and obscurity? whilst the To-mines of the barony of Tulla, like unto the artificial beauties of the Latomi of Syracuse, freely exhibit the most natural and pleasing appearances.

Let the literati and curious, after taking the continental tour of Europe, praise and even write of the imaginary beauties and natural curiosities of Italy and Switzerland—pray, let them also, on a cool reflection, repair to the county of Clare, view and touch upon the truly subterraneous and really unartificial curiosities of the To-mines: they will im- partially admit that these naturally enchanting rarities may be freely visited, and generously treated of, by the ingenious and learned of this and after ages.”—*A Short Tour, or an Impartial and Accurate Description of the County of Clare, by John Lloyd, Ennis; 1780.*

Excellent, Mr Lloyd! Your style is indeed a little peculiar, and what some would think extravagant and grotesque; but you describe with feeling, and we shall certainly visit your To-meens next summer. But in the mean time we must notice another Clare lion, of which you have given us no account—

the lake and castle, which we have drawn as an embellishment to our present number. This is a locality respecting the beauty of which there can be no difference of opinion: it has all the circumstances which give interest to a landscape—wood, water, lake, mountain, and ancient ruin—and the effect of their combination is singularly enhanced by the surprise created by the appearance of a scene so delightful in a district wild, rocky, and unimproved.

The lake of Inchiquin is situated in the parish of Kilmaboy, barony of Inchiquin, and is about two miles and a half in circumference. It is bounded on its western side by a range of hills rugged but richly wooded, and rising abruptly from its margin; and on its southern side, the domain surrounding the residence of the Burton family, and the ornamental grounds of Adelphi, the residence of W. and F. Fitzgerald, Esqrs. contribute to adorn a scene of remarkable natural beauty. One solitary island alone appears on its surface, unless that be ranked as one on which the ancient castle is situated, and which may originally have been insulated, though no longer so. The castle, which is situated at the northern side of the lake, though greatly dilapidated, is still a picturesque and interesting ruin, consisting of the remains of a barbican tower, keep, and old mansion-house attached to it; and its situation on a rocky island or peninsula standing out in the smooth water, with its grey walls relieved by the dark masses of the wooded hills behind, is eminently striking and imposing.

It is from this island or peninsula that the barony takes its name; and from this also the chief of the O'Briens, the Marquis of Thomond, derives his more ancient title of Earl of Inchiquin. For a long period it was the principal residence of the chiefs of this great family, to one of whom it unquestionably owes its origin; but we have not been able to ascertain with certainty the name of its founder, or date of its erection. There is, however, every reason to ascribe its foundation to Tieve O'Brien, king or lord of Thomond, who died, according to the Annals of the Four Masters, in 1466, as he is the first of his name on record who made it his residence, and as its architectural features are most strictly characteristic of the style of the age in which he flourished.

But though the erection of this castle is properly to be ascribed to the O'Briens, it is a great error in the writers of Lewis's Topographical Dictionary to state that it has been from time immemorial the property of the O'Brien family. The locality, as its name indicates, and as history and tradition assure us, was the ancient residence of the O'Quins, a family of equal antiquity with the O'Briens, and of the same stock—namely, the Dal Cas or descendants of Cormac Cas, the son of Ollioll Oluin, who was monarch of Ireland in the beginning of the third century. The O'Quins were chiefs of the clan called Hy-Iffernan, and their possessions were bounded by those of the O'Deas on the east, the O'Loughlins and O'Connors (Corcomroe) on the west and north-west, the O'Hynes on the north, and the O'Hehirs on the south. At what period or from what circumstance the O'Quins lost their ancient patrimony, we have not been able to discover; but it would appear to have been about the middle or perhaps close of the fourteenth century, to which time their genealogy as chiefs is recorded in that invaluable repository of Irish family history, the Book of Mac Firis; and it would seem most probable that they were transplanted by the O'Briens about this period to the county of Limerick, in which they are subsequently found. Their removal is indeed differently accounted for in a popular legend still current in the barony, and which, according to our recollections of it, is to the following effect:

In the youth of the last O'Quin of Inchiquin, he saw from his residence a number of swans of singular beauty frequenting the west side of the lake, and wandering along its shore. Wishing, if possible, to possess himself of one of them, he was in the habit of concealing himself among the rocks and woods in its vicinity, hoping that he might take them by surprise, and he was at length successful: one of them became his captive, and was secretly carried to his residence, when, to his amazement and delight, throwing off her downy covering, she assumed the form of a beautiful woman, and shortly after became his wife. Previous to the marriage, however, she imposed certain conditions on her lover as the price of her consent, to which he willingly agreed. These were—first, that their union should be kept secret; secondly, that he should not receive any visitors at his mansion, particularly those of the O'Briens; and, lastly, that he should wholly abstain from gambling. For some years these conditions were strictly adhered to; they lived in happiness together, and

two children blessed their union. But it happened unfortunately at length that at the neighbouring races at Cood he fell in with the O'Briens, by whom he was hospitably treated; and being induced to indulge in too much wine, he forgot his engagements to his wife, and invited them to his residence on a certain day to repay their kindness to him. His wife heard of this invitation with sadness, but proceeded without remonstrance to prepare the feast for his guests. But she did not grace it with her presence; and when the company had assembled, and were engaged in merriment, she withdrew to her own apartment, to which she called her children, and after embracing them in a paroxysm of grief, which they could not account for, she took her original featherly covering from a press in which it had been kept, arrayed herself in it, and assuming her pristine shape, plunged into the lake, and was never seen afterwards. On the same night, O'Quin, again forgetful of the promises he had made her, engaged in play with Tiege-an-Cood O'Brien, the most distinguished of his guests, and lost the whole of his property.

The reader is at liberty to believe as much or as little of this story as he pleases: but at all events the legend is valuable in a historical point of view, as indicating the period when the lands of Inchiquin passed into the hands of the O'Brien family; nor is it wholly improbable that under the guise of a wild legend may be concealed some indistinct tradition of such a real occurrence as that O'Quin made a union long kept hidden, with a person of inferior station, and that its discovery drew down upon his head the vengeance of his proud peers, and led to their removal to another district of the chiefs of the clan Hy-Ifearnan.

Be this, however, as it may, the ancient family of O'Quin—more fortunate than most other Irish families of noble origin—has never sunk into obscurity, or been without a representative of aristocratic rank; and it can at present boast of a representative among the nobility of the empire in the person of its justly presumed chief, the noble Earl of Dunraven.

We have thus slightly touched on the history of the O'Quins, not only as it was connected with that of the locality which we had to illustrate, but also as necessary to correct a great error into which Burke and other modern genealogists have fallen in their accounts of the origin of the name and descent of this family. Thus it is stated by those writers that "the surname is derived from Con Ceadeaha, or Con of the hundred battles, monarch of Ireland in the second century, whose grandson was called Cuinn (rather O'Cuinn), that is, the descendant of Con, when he wielded the sceptre in 254." But those writers should not have been ignorant that Con, which literally signifies the powerful, was a common name in Ireland both in Christian and Pagan times; and still more, they should not have been ignorant of the important fact for a genealogist, that the use of surnames was unknown in Ireland till the close of the tenth century. The story is altogether a silly fiction; and as the real origin of the family appears to be now unknown even to themselves, and as their pedigree has never as yet been printed, we are tempted to give it in an English form, translated from the original, preserved in the books of Lecan and Duall Mac Firbis:—

"Conor O'Quinn,
the son of Donell,
—— Donell,
—— Thomas,
—— Donell,
—— Donogh,
—— Giolla Seanain,
—— Donogh,
—— Morough,
—— Corc, who was the tutor of Murtogh O'Brien
(the great grandson of Brian Boru),
—— Feidhleachair,
—— Niall, who was henchman to Morough, the son
of Brian Boru, whose fate he shared
in the battle of Clontarf,
—— Conn, from whom the name is derived."

The pedigree is carried up from this Con through eighteen generations to Cormac Cas, the son of Ollioll Oluin, and the common progenitor of all the tribes of the Dal-Cassians.

In this notice we may add, as an evidence of the ancient rank of the family, that the Irish annalists at the year 1188 record the death of Edoain, the daughter of O'Quin, Queen of Munster, on her pilgrimage at Derry in that year. She appears to have been the wife of Murtogh O'Brien, who died

without issue in 1168, and was succeeded by his brother Donald More, the last king of all Munster.

The Castle of Inchiquin is referred to in the Irish Annals as the residence of the chiefs of the O'Brien family, at the years 1542, 1559, and 1573; but the notices contain no interest to the general reader. P.

ANCIENT IRISH LITERATURE—No. II.

In a preceding paper under this heading we lately gave a sample from the lighter class of native Irish poetry of the seventeenth century, namely, "The Woman of Three Cows." We have now to present our readers with a specimen of a more serious character, belonging to the same age—an Elegy on the death of the Tironian and Tirconnellian princes, who having fled with others from Ireland in the year 1607, and afterwards dying at Rome, were there interred on St Peter's Hill, in one grave.

The poem is the production of O'Donnell's bard, Owen Roe Mac an Bhaird, or Ward, who accompanied the family in their flight, and is addressed to Nuala, O'Donnell's sister, who was also one of the fugitives. As the circumstances connected with the flight of the Northern Earls, and which led to the subsequent confiscation of the six Ulster Counties by James I., may not be immediately in the recollection of many of our readers, it may be proper briefly to state, that their departure from this country was caused by the discovery of a letter directed to Sir William Ussher, Clerk of the Council, which was dropped in the Council-chamber on the 7th of May, and which accused the Northern chieftains generally of a conspiracy to overthrow the government. Whether this charge was founded in truth or not, it is not necessary for us to express any opinion; but as in some degree necessary to the illustration of the poem, and as an interesting piece of hitherto unpublished literature in itself, we shall here, as a preface to the poem, extract the following account of the flight of the Northern Earls, as recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters, and translated by Mr O'Donovan:—

"Maguire (Cucconnaught) and Donogh, son of Mahon, who was son of the Bishop O'Brien, sailed in a ship to Ireland, and put in at the harbour of Swilly. They then took with them from Ireland the Earl O'Neill (Hugh, son of Ferdoragh) and the Earl O'Donnell (Rory, son of Hugh, who was son of Maganus) and many others of the nobles of the province of Ulster. These are the persons who went with O'Neill, namely, his Countess, Catherina, daughter of Magennis, and her three sons; Hugh, the Baron, John and Brian; Art Oge, son of Cormac, who was son of the Baron; Ferdoragh, son of Con, who was son of O'Neill; Hugh Oge, son of Brian, who was son of Art O'Neill; and many others of his most intimate friends. These were they who went with the Earl O'Donnell, namely, Caffer, his brother, with his sister Nuala; Hugh, the Earl's child, wanting three weeks of being one year old; Rose, daughter of O'Doherty and wife of Caffer, with her son Hugh, aged two years and three months; his (Rory's) brother son Donnell Oge, son of Donnell, Naghtan son of Calvach, who was son of Donogh Cairbreach O'Donnell, and many others of his intimate friends. They embarked on the Festival of the Holy Cross in Autumn.

"This was a distinguished company; and it is certain that the sea has not borne and the wind has not wafted in modern times a number of persons in one ship more eminent, illustrious, or noble, in point of genealogy, heroic deeds, valour, feats of arms, and brave achievements, than they. Would that God had but permitted them to remain in their patrimonial inheritances until the children should arrive at the age of manhood! Woe to the heart that meditated, woe to the mind that conceived, woe to the council that recommended the project of this expedition, without knowing whether they should, to the end of their lives, be able to return to their native principalities or patrimonies."

AN ELEGY

ON THE TIRONIAN AND TIRCONNELLIAN PRINCES BURIED AT ROME.

"A bhean fuair faill ann an ffeart!"

O, Woman of the Piercing Wail,

Who mournest o'er yon mound of clay

With sigh and groan,

Would God thou wert among the Gael!

Thou wouldst not then from day to day

Weep thus alone.